



材内の磁界の強さが小さな値から大きな値へあるいはその逆に変化することにより切換えが行なわれ、前記部材はこの度キニリ一点の下か値か上でスピニ系の臨界的な感動 (Pluctuation) の範囲内の温度にあり、そして高抵抗状態において、固体部材内に電界を保持するために印加される電圧は、磁界の強さが出現値をとるとときなお切換えが起らぬいような値にすることにより解決される。

・スピニ系の臨界的な感動の範囲となる概念は、特に O. Haas K. よる (IEEE Trans. Magn.) 第 8 卷 (1969 年) 487 頁以下の記述に由来している。

フェロおよびフェリ磁性半導体については特に、

[Helv. Phys. Acta] 第 43 卷 9~16 頁  
(1970 年)

[Phys. stat. solidi(a)] 第 5 卷  
349~357 頁 (1971 年)

[Zeitschrift f. angew. Phys.] 第 32 卷

シング電子の固体部材内に存在させることによつて動作点が調節される。この場合切換えは、固体部材内における磁界の強さを変化させることにより引起される。

本発明の他の特徴に従つて、固体材料が先に述べた温度範囲内にあるように配慮される。

本発明において使用するスピニチング電子の固体部材のための磁性半導体材料として、フェロ、フェリおよびメタ磁性半導体物質が考慮の対象になる。

本発明に使用される半導体材料として、カドミウム、亜鉛、ガリウム、クロムの硫化物もしくはセレン化物、又は鉄、カドミウム、銀、クロムの硫化物もしくはセレン化物が好適である。

本発明においては、 $AB_2X_4$  で示される化合物が特に重要である。ここに、A は Ba, Sr, Ba および (または) Pb ないし Zn, Cd, Hg, Mg, Mn および (または) Cd である。B は Cr または Ru である。そして X は 8 あるいは

10 で説明されている。

本発明は次のような知見に基づいている。

即ち、最初に述べたスピニチング作用は、無定形質の半導体とは異なり、離れた電子-正孔対生成と共に、特に電界および衝突イオン化のようなイオン化作用に基づく比較的弱い不純物領域間の既定された結合により行なわれるようと考えられる。磁性半導体においては、エネルギーギャップ、即ちドーピングおよび (または) 不純物領域のバンドギャップおよびイオン化エネルギーは、外部から加えられる磁界により影響される。上述の本発明に従う固体スピニチング電子は、本発明の特徴に従つて、固体内に電界が存在しない状態において切換えが起るであろうより僅かに小さな電界が固体に加えられる場合、電子の固体内における比較的弱い磁界の僅かな変化、即ち増大または減少により切換えられることが確認された。所定の強度の電界をスピニチ

ングである。この化合物の場合には、ヘキサゴナル構造をもつた化合物ならびに立方スピニルが重要である。

さらに、サマリウム、ユーロピウム又はイフタルビウムの特に酸化物、硫化物、セレン化物又はチル化物を利用することもできる。

材料の特性を最適化するために、特に先にあげた群の混合系が適している。そのドーピングおよび (または) 替換は、通常交換作用の強さの変化を引起する。この結果、他の半導体特性と並んで、材料のキニリ一点も変化される。置換ないしドーピング度により、キニリ一点の外にまたスピニチング電界強度、即ち調整すべき動作点も規定される。

次に、混合系の利用についての好適な例を述べる。先に述べた材料の電気抵抗は、室温で測定して、 $10^2 \sim 10^8 \Omega \text{cm} \cdot \text{cm}$  の範囲内にある。本発明を有効に実施するためには、動作条件により定められる温度範囲内において、約  $10^2 \sim 10^3 \Omega \text{cm} \cdot \text{cm}$  程度の固有抵抗を

もつ磁性半導体材料を使用することが推奨される。

次に、特に好適な混合系の例をあげる。

$Eu_{1-x}Lu_x$	ここで $Lu = La \sim Eu, Y, Sr$ , また $L = Eu, Y$ 又は $La$
	$x = 0, 0.5, 0.8, 1.0$
	$0 < x < 0.1$
$(EuO)_{x}Lu_{1-x}$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$EuO_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$EuO_x + Eu_2O_3$	ここで $0 < x < 0.3$
$EuO_x Y_{4-x}O_x$	ここで $x = 0$ または $0.8$ , $x = 0.8, Br, Y$
	$0.8 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$Mn_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$Mn_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.8$

する。このような材料は、既に本出願人により検索されている（昭和45年特許願第4018号）。この材料は次のような組成をもつている。

$Al_{1-u-w}D_{u}O_x$

ここに、 $w$  は 0 と 0.4 の間にあり、 $u, v$  は 0 と 0.1 の間にあり、 $x + z = 4$  では 0 と 1 の間にあり、 $D$  は元素  $Eu^{(4+)}$ ,  $Sr$ ,  $Ba$ ,  $Eu$  の少なくとも 1 つであり、 $D$  は元素  $Ca$ ,  $Ag$ ,  $Au$ ,  $Li$ ,  $K$ ,  $Na$ ,  $Zn$ ,  $Ca$ ,  $Eg$ ,  $Sn$ ,  $Pb$  の少なくとも 1 つ、或いは  $Lu$ ,  $Y$ ,  $Sc$  を含む稀土類元素の少なくとも 1 つ或いは  $Y$ ,  $Mn$ ,  $Fe$ ,  $Co$ ,  $Bi$ ,  $B$ ,  $Al$ ,  $Ge$ ,  $In$ ,  $Tl$  の少なくとも 1 つであり、 $z$  は元素  $Br$ ,  $Br$ ,  $Y$  の少なくとも 1 つ、そして  $x$  は元素  $Sc$ ,  $Sc$ ,  $Y$  の少なくとも 1 つである。

特に  $x$  が  $Sc_x$ ,  $Sc_{x'}$  で、 $x' + z' + w = 4$  そして  $x'$  および  $z'$  は 0 より大きく  $4$  より小さくなると有利である。

最もしくは銀をドープされたユーロピウム-

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$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0.9 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0.9 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0.9 < x < 1$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 2$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$
$Eu_{1-x}O_x$	ここで $0 < x < 0.05$

特に次の化合物が有効であることを確認した。

$Eu_{0.64}Zn_{0.34}O_{0.02}$	$Ox_2$
$Eu_{0.64}Zn_{0.34}O_{0.02}$	$Ox_2$
$(Eu_{1-x}O_x)_{0.98}Al_{0.02}Ox_2$	$Ox_2$
$(Eu_{1-x}O_x)_{0.98}Al_{0.02}Ox_2$	$Ox_2$

本発明においては、室温以上のキャリヤー点をもつた磁性半導体材料が特に有効性を發揮

クロムセレン化物で、ユーロピウムが二価のイオンをなすものが特に好適である。この場合、ユーロピウムはこの材料内に、化学量論的な量 ( $= v = 0$ ) より少なく  $4.0\%$  ( $= v = 0.4$ ) まで添加することができる。

銀をドープしたユーロピウム-クロムセレン化物の場合には  $v$  は約  $0.01 \sim 0.1$  の値とされる。

以下、本発明を図示の実施例に基づいて詳細に説明する。

第1図は、磁性半導体よりなる部材2を備えた、本発明に従う磁気的に制御可能な固体スイッチング素子1を示す。部材2の互いに対向する表面4および6に、電気的に接触する被覆体(電極を形成する)14および16が設けられている。これら被覆体に電気接続導体24および26が取付けられ、該導体は前記被覆体を電極28に接続する作用をする。

矢印8および7は、本発明の特徴に従つて加えられる境界を示す。境界8および7のい

ずれか一方を加えることもできる。界面 5 の方向は、部材 2 内にかける電流やセリヤの流れの方向に対し平行あるいは逆平行である。界面 7 は、セリヤのこの移動方向と垂直である。本発明に従つたスイッチング効果と最適化するために、前記移動方向と異なる方向の界面を部材 3 内に形成するのが有利である。最適の結果は、この場合結晶性の、特に導電品の部材 2 の結晶方向性に応じて現われる。所定の方向をもつた界面を得るために、方向 5 をもつた界面と、7 をもつたそれとを重複して加え、部材 2 内に所期の方向をもつた合成界面が形成されるようになるとよい。

第 2 図は、部材 2 の表面 4 に、P 型合金の性質を示す接続 4-1 を設けた磁気的に制限可能な固体スイッチング素子を示す。第 2 図の素子の他の部分は、第 1 図の素子のそれと同じである。

この P 型接合は、部材 2 の磁性半導体材料に関して接続する接続 1-4-1 の材料を適宜に

の起る界面強さは、加えられている界面強度の他に、部材 2 内の界面の強さおよび方向に依存している。通常、界面の方向が平行であるか垂直であるかで、切換の起る界面強さが異なる。1 つの方向に阻止性をもつ接合を備えた第 2 図の実施例の場合には、その他に、接合 4-1 を流れる電流が順方向であるか逆方向であるかにより、切換の起る界面強度が互に異なる 2 つの値をもつ。

第 3 図は、本発明において用いられる磁気的に制御可能なスイッチング素子のスイッチング特性を示す。接続 2-1 には、スイッチング素子に加わる電圧ないし部材内に生じた界面強度を取つてある。接続 2-0 には、部材 2 を通して流れる電流を取つてある。曲線 2-3 は高抵抗状態の素子の代表的な電圧-電流特性を示す。曲線 2-2 は低抵抗状態におけるそれを示す。本発明に従つて、これら 2 つの状態は、磁性半導体材料からなる部材 2 内を支配する界面の強さと方向に依存して切換えら

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遷移することにより形成される。第 1 図の実施例の場合には、被覆体 1-4 および 1-6 を形成するための接続材料として、先にあげた組成から選ばれた部材 2 の各材料と接合のない、即ち部材 2 と被覆体 1-6 ないし 1-4 との間にオーム接続を形成するものが使用され、例えば金属或いは二元合金を使用することができる。

第 2 図の実施例において、部材 2 と被覆体 1-6 との間には、第 1 図の実施例と同様に、接合のない接合が形成されている。部材 2 と被覆体 1-4-1 の間の接合部に関しては、領域 4-1 内に P 型接合が形成され、1 つの方向への電流の流通が阻止されるよう、その材料が選ばれている。

被覆体 1-4, 1-6, 1-4-1 の材料としては、例えば Cu, Ag, Au, Pt, Rh, Cr, Mo, Al, Ge, In, Pb, Zn, Cd, Hg あるいはこれらの二元合金があげられる。

既に説明した通り、本発明が利用する切換

される。曲線 2-3 は界面強度が例えば 0 のときそして曲線 2-2 は  $1 \text{ V}_0/\text{m}^2$  のオーダの値のときに行なわれたものである。

既に最初に説明した通り、半導体材料内に界面を形成することにより電気抵抗を制御することは公知であつた。しかしながら、このものでは、磁電変換効率が比較的低く、実用的な界面強さの場合には 10 ~ 15 % のパンダ変位しか、そしてこれに伴つて材料の抵抗値の僅かな変化しか生じない。

これに対し本発明においては、磁気的に制御された電気的なスイッチング作用が利用される。第 3 図からも解るよう、この場合には、比較的微弱な界面の比較的僅かな変化によつて、電気抵抗が大幅に変化する。これは、特に、本発明の特徴とするとところに従つて、磁性半導体材料内にスイッチングを行なわせるための界面を加えたことに基づいている。従来公知の、界面により抵抗値を変化させる構造においても、また、半導体材料に界面を

加えていたけれども、これはそれを壊れるキヤリヤを移動させるためにすぎない。この電界強度は本発明に従つて与えられるスイッチング作用を行なわせるための電界強度より著しく小さい。

本発明に従つて与えられる、スイッチングを行なわせるための電界強度は、低抵抗状態において電流を制限するため第1図および第2図に125で示す電気的な直列抵抗を電流回路内に設けなければならない程に高い。低抵抗スイッチング状態から高抵抗スイッチング状態に切換えるためには、低抵抗スイッチング状態を解除するため、少なくとも短時間電源2-5との接続を断つ必要がある。

#### 4. 図面の簡単な説明

第1図および第2図は本発明のそれぞれ異なる実施例の構成配線図、第3図は本発明に従う電子の特性を示す線図であつて、1は固体スイッチング電子、2は磁性半導体よりなる部材、3, 7は電界の方向を示す矢印、

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14, 15, 141は接続体(電極)、25は電源、41はP-N結合が形成された領域である。

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Fig.2

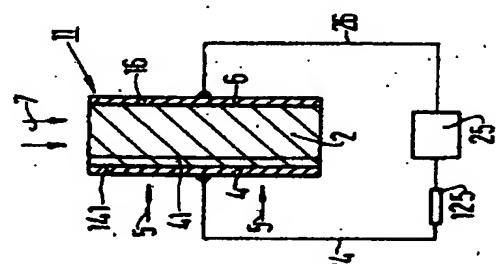


Fig.1

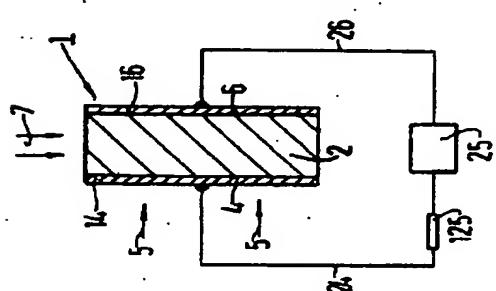
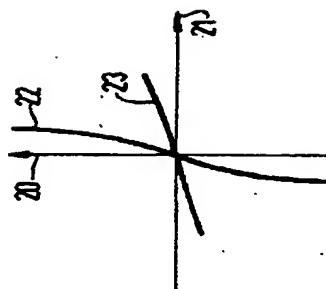


Fig.3



5. 送付書類の目録

(1) 願書	1通
(2) 明細書	1通
(3) 図面	1通
(4) 委任状及訳文	各1通
(5) 優先権証明書及訳文	各1通

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 469 477 479 483 493



## (54) IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO SOLID-STATE SWITCHING SYSTEMS

(71) We, SIEMENS AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT, a German Company of Berlin and Munich, Germany, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

5 The present invention relates to solid-state switching systems comprising a body having electrodes thereon to provide an electric field in the body, in which switching is effected from a high-ohmic to a low-ohmic state of conductivity.

In Appl. Phys. Letters, Volume 17, No. 5 (1970) pp 199 to 201, there is described a switching effect in monocrystals of yttrium-iron-garnet, doped with silicon. The switching effect concerned here is switching from a high-ohmic state to a low-ohmic state of conduction when a specific electric field strength in the material of the crystalline body is exceeded. This is a switching process in the solid material. Another switching effect, the result of which is similar, has been observed in amorphous semiconductor materials and has come to be known as the Ovshinsky effect.

10 15 It is an object of the present invention to provide a solid-state switching system using a body made of a magnetic semiconductor material.

According to the invention, there is provided a solid-state switching system comprising a body of magnetic semiconductor material, electrodes carried by said body, a voltage source connected between said electrodes, and means for applying a variable strength magnetic field having a pre-selected direction to said body, wherein said body is maintained both at a temperature not substantially above the Curie temperature of the material and in the zone of critical fluctuation of the spin system thereof, wherein switching of said body from a high-ohmic to a low-ohmic state is effected by increasing the strength of said magnetic field, and switching of said body from said low-ohmic to said high-ohmic state is effected by decreasing the strength of said magnetic field, and wherein the voltage applied to said body from said voltage source has a value such that the electric field thereby produced in said body, whilst ineffective in itself to switch said body, acts substantially to reduce the strength of said magnetic field and/or the extent of the variation in the strength of said magnetic field required to switch said body, as compared with the field strength and/or variation therein which would be required to switch said body in the absence of said electric field. The semiconductor body is preferably crystalline but may be amorphous.

15 20 25 The concept "zone of critical fluctuation of the spin system", referred to above, is explained amongst others by C. Haas, IEEE Trans. magn. Volume 5 (1969) pp 487ff.

Details of ferromagnetic and ferrimagnetic semiconductors are given *inter alia* in Helv. Phys. Acta, volume 43, pp 9-16 (1970); Phys. stat. solidi (a) volume 5, pp 349-357 (1971); and Zeitschrift f. angew. Phys. volume 32, pp 80-83 (1971).

20 25 30 35 The switching effects in crystalline semiconductors seem to be produced by determinate transitions between relatively narrow impurity levels as a consequence of ionisation effects, in particular field and collision ionisation, coupled with thermal pair formation. In magnetic

[Price 35p]

semiconductors, the energy gap, i.e. the band interval and the ionisation energy of doping and/or impurity levels, can be influenced by external magnetic fields. It has now been found that a solid-state switching system in accordance with the invention can be switched even with a relatively small change, i.e. increase or decrease, in a relatively weak magnetic field in the solid, if, in accordance with the invention, in the solid body there is present an electric field whose field strength is only slightly less than that at which the solid-state system would switch if no magnetic field were present. Owing to the presence of an electric field of predetermined strength in the solid body of the switching system, a working point is created. The actual switching can then be effected by a change in the magnetic field strength in the solid body.

As the magnetic semiconductor material used for the body of the switching system in accordance with the invention, it is possible to use ferromagnetic, ferrimagnetic and metamagnetic semiconducting materials. Metamagnetic materials are materials which below a specific temperature (the Néel temperature) can be changed from a paramagnetic into a ferromagnetic state by the application of a suitably strong external magnetic field (see, "Elektrizitätslehre" by R. W. Pohl, Berlin, Goettingen, Heidelberg, 1961, at page 320).

Of particular importance so far as the present invention is concerned are compounds of the type  $AB_2X_4$ , where A is at least one of the elements europium, strontium, barium and lead or at least one of the elements zinc, cadmium, mercury, magnesium, manganese and cobalt; B is chromium or rhodium; and X is sulphur or selenium. These compounds either have a hexagonal structure or are cubic spinels.

Moreover, oxides, sulphides, selenides, or tellurides of samarium, europium, or ytterbium, can also be used with particular advantage.

To obtain material having optimum properties, mixed systems from the aforementioned groups are advantageously used. Their doping and/or substitution generally produces a change in the magnitude of the exchange interactions. In this way, in addition to varying other properties of the semiconductors, it is possible also to vary the Curie temperature of the material. The level of the substitution of doping factor also determines the electric switching field strength required, i.e. the working point, as well as the Curie temperature.

Preferred examples of hybrid systems which can be used are given below. Measured at room temperature, the electrical resistances of these materials lies between  $10^2$  and  $10^5$  Ohm.cm. In putting the invention into practice, it is advisable to use a magnetic semiconductor material which, at the temperature in the range required by the operating conditions, has a specific resistance of between  $10^2$  and  $10^5$  Ohm.cm.

35	$Eu_{1-x}L_xX$	where L is lanthanum to lutecium, yttrium, strontium and preferably L is gadolinium, cerium, or neodymium	35
		X is oxygen, sulphur, selenium, tellurium and $0 < x < 0.1$ ;	
	$(EuO)_xL_{1-x}S$	where $0 < x < 1$ and L is as before;	
	$EuO_xS_{1-x}$	" $0 < x < 1$ ;	
40	$xGdS + Gd_2S_3$	" $0 < x < 0.3$ ;	40
	$CuCr_2X_{4-x}Y_x$	" X is sulphur or selenium, Y is chlorine, bromine, iodine and $0.8 < x < 1$ ;	
	$Zn_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2S_4$	where $0 < x < 1$	
45	$Zn_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 1$	45
	$Hg_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 1$	
	$Hg_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 1$	
	$Mn_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 1$	
	$Mn_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 1$	
50	$Fe_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 0.5$	50
	$Fe_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0.99 < x < 1$	
	$Eu_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2S_4$	" $0.99 < x < 1.0$	
	$Eu_{1-x}Cd_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0.99 < x < 1.0$	
	$CoRh_{2-x}Cr_xS_4$	" $0 < x < 2$	
55	$Cd_{1-x}Ga_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	55
	$Cd_{1-x}Ga_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	
	$Cd_{1-x}In_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	
	$Cd_{1-x}In_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	
	$Cd_{1-x}Ag_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	
60	$Cd_{1-x}Ag_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	60
	$Cd_{1-x}Cu_xCr_2S_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	
	$Cd_{1-x}Cu_xCr_2Se_4$	" $0 < x < 0.05$	
65	Cadmium-zinc-gallium-chromium sulphides and selenides and iron-cadmium-silver-chromium sulphides and selenides can advantageously be used. Of these, the compounds		65

$Cd_{0.64}Zn_{0.34}Ga_{0.02}Cr_2S_4$ ;  
 $Cd_{0.64}Zn_{0.34}Ga_{0.02}Cr_2Se_4$ ;  
 $(Fe_{1-x}Cd_x)_{0.98}Ag_{0.02}Cr_2S_4$  where  $0 < x < 1$ ; and  
 $(Fe_{1-x}Cd_x)_{0.98}Ag_{0.02}Cr_2Se_4$   $0 < x < 0.1$ ,  
 have been found to be particularly useful.

Of especial interest as far as the invention is concerned, are magnetic semiconducting materials having Curie temperature values above room temperature. Materials of this kind are described in our co-pending Application No. 53153/72. These materials are of the general formula:—

10 where  $w$  is between 0 and 0.4,  $u$  is between 0 and 0.1;  $x+z = 4$ ,  $z$  is equal to or greater than 0 and equal to or less than 1;  $A$  is at least one of the elements Eu<sup>(++)</sup>, Sr, Ba, Pb;  $D$  is at least one of the elements Cu, Ag, Au, Li, K, Na, Zn, Cd, Hg, Sn, Pb, or at least one of the rare earth elements, including Lu; Y and Sc; or at least one of the elements V, Mn, Fe, Co, Ni, B, Al, Ga, In, Tl;  $Z$  is at least one of the elements Cl, Br, I; and  $X$  is at least one of the elements S, Se, Te.

In particular,  $X$  may be  $S_{x'}Se_{x''}$ , where  $x'+x''+z = 4$  and each of  $x'$  and  $x''$  is greater than 0 and less than 4.

20 Copper-doped or silver-doped europium-chromium selenides are preferred, the europium being present therein in divalent form. The europium can in this case be present in the material in an excess of up to 40% (i.e.  $w = 0.4$ ) as compared with the stoichiometric ratio ( $w = 0$ ).

In the case of copper-doped europium-chromium selenides,  $u$  preferably has a value from 0.01 to 0.1.

25 The invention will now be further described with reference to the drawing, in which:—  
 Figure 1 is a schematic circuit diagram of a first exemplary embodiment of the invention;  
 Figure 2 is a schematic circuit diagram of a second exemplary embodiment of the invention;  
 and

Figure 3 is a graph illustrating the switching characteristics of a switching system according to the invention.

30 Referring to Figure 1, a magnetically-controllable solid-state switching element 1 has a crystalline body 2 made of a magnetic semiconductor material. On mutually opposite faces 4 and 6 of this body 2, there are arranged electrical contact electrodes 14 and 16 respectively. To these electrodes, leads 24 and 26 respectively are connected and connect the electrodes to a voltage source 25.

35 The arrows 5 and 7 indicate magnetic fields which are provided in accordance with the invention. Either the magnetic field 5 or the magnetic field 7 can be provided. The magnetic field 5 is parallel to or in an opposed parallel arrangement with the direction of the electrical charge-carrier flow in the body 2. The magnetic field 7 is perpendicular to this direction of the charge-carrier flow. In order to optimise the switching effect in accordance with the invention, it may, however, be advantageous to arrange for there to be a magnetic field in the body 2, the direction of which is not either of these two specified directions. The production of an optimum effect is dependent upon the orientation of the crystalline (preferably monocrystalline) body 2. In order to produce such a magnetic field direction, superimposed magnetic fields in the directions 5 and 7 may be applied which as a resultant generate a magnetic field in the required direction in the body 2.

40 Figure 2 shows a magnetically controllable solid-state switching element 11, in which, in the surface 4 of the body 2 there is provided an area 41 forming a p-n junction. Otherwise, Figure 2 corresponds to Figure 1.

45 The p-n junction is produced by an appropriate choice of the material of the contacting electrode 141 (corresponding to the electrode 14 of Figure 1) in relation to the magnetic semiconductor material of the body 2. In the example of Figure 1, the contacting metals of the electrodes 14 and 16 are ones which with the particular material of the body 2, form non-blocking (i.e. ohmic) contacts between the body 2 and the electrodes 16 and 14.

50 In the example of Figure 2, for the junction between the body 2 and the electrode 16, a non-blocking junction is used, as in the example of Figure 1. The junction between the body 2 and the electrode 141 is, however, so contrived in terms of the materials used, that a p-n junction is formed in the area 41 which blocks in one direction.

55 As materials for the electrodes 14, 16, 141, it is possible to use Cu, Ag, Au, Pt, Rh, Cr, Mo, Al, Ga, In, Pb, Zn, Cd, Hg, or binary alloys of these metals.

60 As already stated, the magnetic field strength at which the switching effect made use of in the invention occurs, is dependent not only upon the strength of the applied electric field but also upon the direction of the magnetic field in the body 2. Generally, different levels of switching field strengths are produced in respect of parallel magnetic fields, on the one hand, and perpendicular magnetic fields, on the other hand. In the arrangement of the kind shown in Figure 2, with a junction which blocks in one direction, there are also two electric switching

4 field strengths at different levels, these depending upon whether the current across the junction  
41 is in the forward or reverse direction.

5 Figure 3 shows the switching characteristic of a magnetically-controllable switching system  
in accordance with the invention. On the abscissa 21, the voltage applied to the switching  
5 element, or the electric field strength present in the body, has been plotted. On the ordinate 20,  
the electric current flowing through the body has been plotted. The curve 23 illustrates a typical  
10 current-voltage characteristic for the high-ohmic state. The curve 22 illustrates the typical  
behaviour encountered in the low-ohmic state. In accordance with the invention, these two  
states depend upon the magnitude and direction of the magnetic field strength prevailing in  
15 the body 2 of magnetically-semiconducting material. In the case of the curve 23, the magnetic  
field strength (as indicated by the flux density in the body), for example, may have a value of  
zero and, in the case of the curve 22, a value of the flux density of the order of 1 Vs/m<sup>2</sup>.

15 As already mentioned, it was already known to use the magnetic field strength in the semi-  
conducting material to control the electrical resistance. Because of the relatively small magneto-  
electrical interaction, however, at the relevant magnetic field strengths, band-shifts of only  
about 10 or 15% are experienced, and correspondingly small changes of resistance in the  
material.

20 In the case of the present invention, however, a magnetically induced electrical switching  
function is exploited. As Figure 3 also shows, the electrical resistance in so doing alters by  
several orders of magnitude for a relatively small change in a relatively weak magnetic field.  
25 This is due, amongst other things, to the electric switching field strength provided in the  
magnetic semiconductor material. Although, in the known arrangements which also employ  
magnetic resistance change in the semiconductor material, there is an electric field, this serves  
only to move the charge-carriers involved there. This field strength is many times weaker  
30 than the switching field strength which must be provided in accordance with the invention.

30 The electric switching field provided in accordance with the invention is of such a magnitude  
that, in order to limit the current in the low-ohmic state, a series resistor (125 in Figures 1 and 2)  
has to be included in the circuit. For transition from the low-ohmic state to the high-ohmic  
35 state, the voltage source 25 must be switched off, at least for a short time, in order to erase  
the low-ohmic state.

35 **WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—**

40 1. A solid-state switching system comprising a body made of magnetic semiconductor  
material, electrodes carried by said body, a voltage source connected between said electrodes,  
and means for applying a variable strength magnetic field having a pre-selected direction to  
45 said body, wherein said body is maintained both at a temperature not substantially above the  
Curie temperature of the material and in the zone of critical fluctuation of the spin system  
thereof, wherein switching of said body from a high-ohmic to a low-ohmic state is effected  
by increasing the strength of said magnetic field, and switching of said body from said low-  
50 ohmic to said high-ohmic state is effected by decreasing the strength of said magnetic field,  
and wherein the voltage applied to said body from said voltage source has a value such that  
the electric field thereby produced in said body, whilst ineffective in itself to switch said body,  
acts substantially to reduce the strength of said magnetic field and/or the extent of the variation  
55 in the strength of said magnetic field required to switch said body, as compared with the field  
strength and/or variation therein which would be required to switch said body in the absence  
of said electric field.

45 2. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said body is crystalline.

3. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein said magnetic  
55 semiconductor material is of the general formula  $AB_2X_4$ , where A is at least one of the elements  
Eu, Sr, Ba and Pb, or at least one of the elements Zn, Cd, Hg, Mn, Mg and Co; B is Cr or Rh;  
and X is S or Se.

4. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein said magnetic  
semiconductor material is an oxide, sulphide, or selenide of samarium, europium, or ytterbium.

5. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein said magnetic  
55 semiconductor material is a cadmium-zinc-gallium, chromium sulphide or selenide.

6. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said magnetic semi-  
conductor material is  $Cd_{0.4}Zn_{0.14}Ga_{0.02}Cr_2X_4$ , where X is S or Se.

7. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein said magnetic  
semiconductor material is an iron-cadmium-silver-chromium sulphide or selenide.

8. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said magnetic semi-  
conductor material is  $(Fe_{1-x}Cd_x)_{0.98}Ag_{0.02}Cr_2X$ , where X is S or Se and x is greater than  
60 0 but less than 1.

9. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein said magnetic  
semiconductor material has a composition corresponding to the general formula:—

$$A_{1-w}D_wCr_2X_2$$

where w is between 0 and 0.4;

$u$  is between 0 and 0.1;  
 $x+z = 4$ ;

$z$  is equal to or greater than 0 and equal to or less than 1;  
5 A is at least one of the elements Eu<sup>(++)</sup>, Sr, Ba, Pb; D is at least one of the elements Cu, Ag, Au, Li, K, Na, Zn, Cd, Hg, Sn, Pb, or at least one of the rare earth elements, including Lu, Y and Sc, or at least one of the elements V, Mn, Fe, Co, Ni, B, Al, Ga, In, and Tl;

Z is at least one of the elements Cl, Br and I; and  
X is at least one of the elements S, Se and Te.

10 10. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 9, wherein X is S<sub>x</sub>, Se<sub>x</sub>, where  $x' + x'' + z = 4$ , and each of  $x'$  and  $x''$  is greater than 0 and less than 4. 10

11. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 9 or Claim 10, wherein said magnetic semiconductor material is a silver or copper-doped europium-chromium selenide.

12. A solid-state switching system as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said magnetic semiconductor material is a copper-doped europium-chromium selenide and  $u$  has a value of 15 from 0.01 to 0.1.

13. A solid-state switching system as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims, wherein one of the electrodes carried by said body is made of a metal or binary metal alloy such that it forms with the material of said body a p-n junction.

20 14. A solid-state switching system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figure 1 or Figure 2, and Figure 3 of the drawing. 20

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1413431

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET

*This drawing is a reproduction of  
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Fig.1

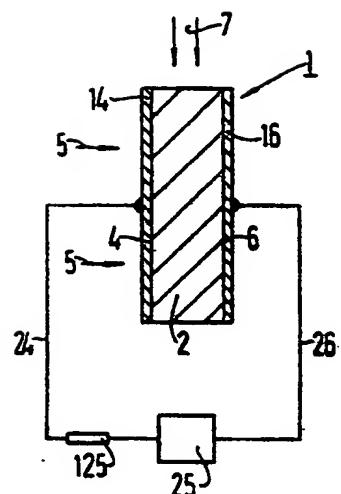


Fig.2

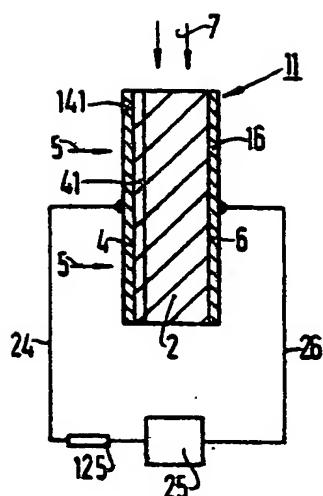
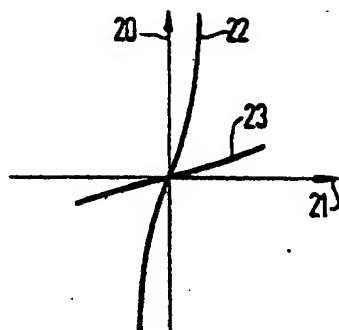


Fig.3



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